

Moorefields

HABS No.

NC-271

State Route 1135

Hillsborough

Orange County

North Carolina

HABS  
NC,  
68-1414R  
9-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
NC  
68-HILTS  
9 -

Historic American Buildings Survey

Name of Structure - Moorefields

Address - State Route 1135 , Hillsborough, Orange County, North Carolina

Present Owner - Edward T. Draper-Savage  
Moorefields  
Hillsborough  
North Carolina

Present Occupant - Edward T. Draper-Savage  
Moorefields  
Hillsborough  
North Carolina

Present Use - Private Home

Brief Statement of Significance - Moorefields was built in 1785 by U. S. Supreme Court Justice Alfred Moore and the Moores and Waddells have owned it for all except 37 years of its 178 year life. A relative by marriage of Justice Alfred Moore owns it today and has restored it. Justice Alfred Moore was the friend and benefactor of the neighboring University of North Carolina as well as one of its first trustees. Other owners of Moorefields have been the Hon. Alfred Moore (son of the Justice), Hugh Waddell, Thomas Webb, and lastly, the sculptor, Edward Thayer Draper-Savage.

Moorefields is a notable small rural manor house. It has a high central block with single story flanking wings. Its windows are uniformly small and narrow. One, in the north wall of the Great Hall, bears Justice Alfred Moore's signature, "A. Moore" cut with a diamond.

Tradition says that Mrs. Henry Clay and Thomas Hart Benton were both born at Moorefields. Actually they were born somewhat to the north.

A family cemetery at Moorefields contains graves of various members of the Moore, Nash, and Waddell families.

Date of Erection - 1785

Architect - Unknown

Builder, suppliers, etc. - Justice Alfred Moore built Moorefields as his summer home (his winter home was on the Cape Fear). It has always been said that he employed negro carpenters to build it. Very possibly they were his own slaves. Family tradition says that it took seven men three years to build Moorefields.

Original Plan, Construction, etc. Moorefields stands almost exactly as it was built - a high central block with two flanking right-angle wings. An open porch connected the wings on the north. The original front porch on the south had a shed roof, and this has been restored to it today. The wings of Moorefields stood on brick pillars. The entire foundation has now been filled in. A separate kitchen stood nearby, but this has vanished. The Great Hall was originally used for meals, the smaller rooms in the wings for bedrooms. Moorefields' original roof was of cedar shakes, members of the family say, but these have been replaced by composition-slate shingles.

Each corner post of the Great Hall is a single tree trunk. The laths are of hand-rived oak. The house is of the usual braced-frame construction. All of this was visible until recently (1963) when Mr. Draper-Savage replastered the Great Hall.

Moorefields has been altered surprisingly little. It is still exactly the same elegant small rural manor house that it was originally. It has its original floor plan, flooring of wide pine boards, moldings, weatherboarding, chimneys, mantels, shutters, and much of its hardware. Its most spectacular feature is its fine Chinese Chippendale staircase which it seems unlikely a negro carpenter could have built. The Great Hall has unexpectedly fine proportions, a beautiful chair rail, and a fine overmantel.

Although it is popularly said that the walls of Moorefields are insulated with brick, that does not seem to be true. The walls of the Great Hall apparently had a clay mixture behind the laths as do most houses in the Hillsborough area.

Physical History:

Original and Subsequent Owners:

1. Grant from John Earl Granville to John Gray for 500 acres on March 25, 1752 (Land Office Records, Raleigh, N. C.)
2. Will of John Gray to Thomas Hart (Will Book A, p. 182). Will dated Feb. 19, 1775; proved May, 1775. Wills to Col. Thomas Hart his lands on Seven Mile Creek which came to him "25 March 1752 from Lord Granville."
3. If Thomas Hart sold the chief acreage of Moorefields to Alfred Moore, Sr., as seems likely, no deed exists. Deeds do exist for various purchases of small acreages by Alfred Moore, e. g., Oct. 15, 1789 (Deed Book 4, 347) and Oct. 22, 1791 (DB 4, 469); also Sept. 1, 1808 (DB 13, 124).
4. Will of Alfred Moore, Sr. (d. 1810), proved Jan. Term, 1811, in Brunswick County. Devised Moorefields to his son, the Hon. Alfred Moore, for life with remainder to his children.
5. Will of Hon. Alfred Moore (in Will Book E, 503), January, 1837; proved Aug., 1837. Leaves entire estate to son-in-law Francis Nash Waddell with stipulation that it be kept intact for two years. "Should my Sister Sarah L. Moore survive me and choose to reside in North Carolina I devise to her my house and plantation called Moorefields in the County of Orange on which I now live with all the furniture Stock Negroes, etc., etc. In a word just as it shall stand at the time of my death and place her in the attitude in which I stood while living."
6. Petition of Hugh Waddell in behalf of the children of Honorable Alfred Moore - Elizabeth, Susan Emma, Caroline and Augusta - to the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions (Reported on, May Term, 1847) to divide the Moorefields lands equitably according to the terms of Justice Alfred Moore's Will of 1810. (DB 32, 512). The petition asks the court to appoint commissioners "who may go upon the premises and divide the same as nearly equally in quantity and value as may be practicable."
7. Commissioners appointed for the division of Moorefields are: Cad R. Jones, J. S. Smith, Pride Jones, James C. Turrentine, Henry K. Nash.

The Commissioners had a Survey of Moorefields made by County Surveyor Silas M. Link. They find a total of 1202 2/5 acres with a value of \$5350. They divided the total acreage into 5 parts in an effort to give each inheritor a value of \$1070.

- Tract No. 1 - Augusta W. Moore - \$1600
- Tract No. 2 - Emma and her husband, Dr. William Cameron - \$1000
- Tract No. 3 - Caroline and her husband, Haywood W. Guion - \$1100
- Tract No. 4 - Elizabeth and her husband, Francis Nash Waddell - \$650
- Tract No. 5 - Susan and her husband, Hugh Waddell, \$1000

8. Tract No. 1 included the Moorefields plantation house where Augusta Moore lived with Elizabeth Davis Moore (her sister) and her husband Francis Nash Waddell.
9. The remaining tracts were quickly sold as follows:
  - a. May 24, 1847 (DB 33,167-168) - Hugh Waddell and Susan M. Waddell to James C. Turrentine. Tract No. 5, 251 1/3A, \$1500  
(But see also DB 33, 165-166).
  - b. June 8, 1847 (DB 32,564) - Haywood W. Guion and Caroline R. Guion to William A. Graham. Tract No. 3. 254A. \$1000.
  - c. Nov. 1, 1847 (DB 34,591) - Francis N. Waddell and Elizabeth Waddell to Richard J. Ashe. Tract No. 4. 269 1/2 A. \$650.00.  
(Only Tract No. 2 was retained by Emma Moore and her husband Dr. William Camoron. See DB 33,336-337, for agreement between William Cameron's heirs about Alfred Moore's lands.)
10. Jan. 9, 1873 (DB 63-149) - Charles E. Waddell assigns to Guion W. Waddell for \$200 his "one sixth undivided share or interest in the tract or parcel of land known as the Moorefields plantation situated in the county of Orange.....containing 175 acres or thereabouts."
11. After Guion Waddell's death in 1911, the various heirs of Elizabeth Davis Waddell instituted special proceedings in the Superior Court of Orange Co., "Frank N. Waddell and others, heirs of Elizabeth Waddell d'ed vs. Charles Iredell Iglehart and others." John H. Johnston was appointed commissioner.
12. Moorefields was advertised for public sale by Commissioner John H. Johnston on Aug. 26, 1913.
13. Sept. 16, 1913 (DB 66,573) - John H. Johnston, Commissioner, sells Moorefields, "157 acres more or less but reserving graveyard of one quarter of an acre", to Thomas H. Webb of Harnett Co. for \$2,200.
14. Nov. 1, 1919 (DB 77,232) - Thomas H. Webb and Louise R. Webb sell Moorefields ("containing 157 acres more or less but reserving graveyard of an acre") to June and Ada Ray for \$5750.
15. Apr. 21, 1934 (DB 102,92) - June Ray deeds Moorefields to Ada L. Ray "for and during the term of her natural life" for \$10.00 etc.
16. June 7, 1947 (DB 127,49) Gladys L. Coley deeds Moorefields to June W. and Ada L. Ray for \$10.00 etc.
17. May 14, 1949 (DB 131,575) - June W. Ray and Ada L. Ray deed Moorefields to Edward T. Draper-Savage "157 acres more or less but there is excepted one acre contained in graveyard.....also 50 acres sold to Clifford King Mar. 23, 1923" (DB 81,257) for \$10 00 etc.  
(See also DB 132,24 and DB 132,609 for additional acreage purchased by Edward T. Draper-Savage from Carrie M. King and Clifford E. King et al.)  
See Plat of Moorefields, June 3, 1949, in Plat Book 4, 108, and also Plat Book 4, 115.
18. Present owner: Edward T. Draper-Savage.

Notes on Alterations and Additions: Moorefields has been gradually restored by Mr. Edward T. Draper-Savage between the years 1949-1963, and the work is still going on. (Mr. Draper-Savage received the Cannon Cup in 1960 for his restoration work from the N. C. Society for the Preservation of Antiquities.) Rooms have been replastered, floors sanded, a heating system installed, and the original shed roof has been restored to the front porch. The north porch has been enclosed with glass and a canopy over the north entrance has been built. Upstairs, a small room which may have been Justice Alfred Moore's study has been converted into a bathroom.

The chair-rail in the south room of the west wing (now the library) had been removed and sold, but Mr. Draper-Savage has had a replica made. Similarly, the overmantel in the north room of the west wing had disappeared, but Mr. Draper-Savage copied the one in the south room and replaced it.

A few very small sections of pine flooring have been replaced. It seems likely also that the front door is not the original one. (The rim-lock is an old one placed there recently.)

Historical Events Connected with Structure: Moorefields was the home of Alfred Moore, one of North Carolina's two Supreme Court Justices. His son, the Hon. Alfred Moore, was born there, died there, and is buried there as are two of the Justice's daughters, Augusta Moore and Sarah Louisa Moore. Moorefields was the home of various Waddells, several of whom were distinguished for civic service.

The site of Moorefields was historic even before Alfred Moore acquired it. The first session of a Court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions ever held in Orange County was held on Sept. 9, 1752, at the home of John Gray not far from the present plantation house of Moorefields. In fact, Gray called his home "Grayfields."

Important Old Views - None  
(Location)

Sources of Information: (1) Article by Rebecca Waddell Cushman, "Historic 'Moorefields' Witnessed Drama by Colonial Heroes," News and Observer (Raleigh, N. C.), Oct. 24, 1948; (2) Alfred Moore Waddell, Some Memories of My Life (Raleigh, 1908); (3) Deeds Books and Will Books of Orange County in the Orange County Courthouse; (4) Interviews with Miss Annie S. Cameron, Mr. Edward T. Draper-Savage, and Miss Rebecca Waddell Cushman; (5) Biographical articles in The North Carolina Booklet: "General Francis Nash," Vol. XIV (July, 1914), 74-90. (6) Plan of Moorefields Cemetery drawn by Miss Annie S. Cameron (in files of Hillsborough Historical Society); (7) Orange County Court Minutes (Dept. of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.) (8) Article by Betty Hodges, "A Remarkable Hillsboro Manor is Salvaged by Sculptor Draper-Savage," Durham Morning Herald, Sunday, March 18, 1962. (9) Notes and plat from Dr. Charles H. Blake.